

YAN WANG PRESTON**UPROOTED BETWEEN HOMELAND AND MIGRATION**

The photographer Yan Wang Preston observed the way that trees in her native China were deliberately moved to make way for urban development. In her volume of photographs *Forest* she examines themes such as homeland and migration.

Berlin, May 14, 2018 — Surrounded by big-city high-rises and paved streets, a group of young trees burgeon straight upward toward the sky. Elsewhere, a mammoth three-hundred-year-old tree stands with branches supported in front of the skeleton of a hotel complex under construction. The tree trunk is enveloped in plastic, which is wrapped around the wood like a bandage protecting an injured body part.

Both observations can be found in the photographs by the artist Yan Wang Preston (*1976), who has spent several years documenting how individual trees in rural regions of China are being replanted to make way for urban developments. She discovered a flourishing trade in transplanting nature and confronted the question of to what extent the uprooting and replanting of trees reflect a general image of society.

“The tree can be seen as a metaphor for migration. Chongqing, where Preston has photographed over many years, has a population of nearly thirty million and continues to grow exponentially. This expanding metropolis echoes the trend of global migration, where millions of rural workers move to cities. It is estimated that half of the world’s new cities in 2030 have not yet been built. In this migratory process, trees and people experience the same trauma of leaving a familiar land and a familiar life more in tune with nature,” says the curator Zelda Cheatle in the foreword to the book.

Yan Wang Preston, who has a doctorate in photography from the University of Plymouth, has spent many years documenting the transformation of the environment and nature in her native China with great sensitivity. Part of her series of photographs, *Mother River* (a new Hatje Cantz release in October 2018), has already been shown at the 56th Venice Biennial in 2016. In this long-term project, Preston documents the changes in the landscape along the 6211-kilometer-long Yangtze River, caused by industrialization, urban development, and environmental pollution.

Preston won First Prize from the Syngenta Photography Award for her project *Forest*.



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FOREST

Texts by Zelda Cheatle, Nadine Barth, graphic design by
Julia Wagner, grafikanstalt
English
2018. 128 pp., 60 ills.
hardcover with a dust jacket
30.00 x 26.00 cm
ISBN 978-3-7757-4375-4
50,00 EUR

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Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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